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A General Epistle TO FRIENDS

Who are Convinced of

God's Eternal TRUTH,

And have Received the Testimony of it.

That all may be Kept Faithful in their Testimony to the Truth, Life and Power of God, which is Unchangeable;

And be preserved unto God by his Power (out of and over) all that which is Changeable, and such as are subject to Change their Wayes.

By James Parke.

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A General Epiſtle to Friends, &c.

DEar *Friends* and *Brethren*, in the Univerſal Love of God do I ſalute you, and in the freſh Remembrance of the Power of that Life which hath no End do I exhort you all to keep in the unchangeable Life and Power, which was before Death and Weakneſs was, which is the ſame forever, and purely preſerves to God out of Darkneſs, Weakneſs, and all that which is Changeable; the minding whereof brings Darkneſs over the Underſtanding, and will weaken your Faith in the Day of Tryal, from whence comes Doubting, Fleſhly Reaſonings and Unbelief about God's Requirings, and the Teſtimony of the Truth; and one ſaith God requires *one thing*, another appears in a Contrary Mind, and yet pretends his *freedom in the Truth* in that which is *inconſiſtent with the Teſtimony of Truth*, as generally received and believed by all that keep in the Spirit of it, and are baptized by one Spirit into one Body: Here is not many Minds, Opinions, Diviſion, nor none Broken in Judgment in their Teſtimony, as it is amongſt them all who are out of the Life and Power of God, they are kept in the many Minds, Opinions, Diviſion, and Broken in Judgment, changing as the Times change, their Minds, Opinions and Judgments being wrong, corrupted, and being in that that is changeable, and will have an End, they look for Help from that which is changeable, and will have an End: But *Dear Friends*, you that are brought and redeemed out of that that is changeable, and will have an end, into that which is

unchangeable of God, and is the ſame forever. ● dwell and abide in that which gathers you into one, and to mind the ſame things, and to be kept one in Heart, Soul and Spirit, and ſpiritual Judgment, againſt all that which would divide in God's *Iſrael*, againſt all that which would keep Self alive, and plead to ſave Self, when God's Teſtimony requires Self-denyal, and Croſſing Self (and 'tis faithful following of the Lamb he requires) and He and his faithful Followers muſt have the Victory, and not the Dragon, nor his Followers, be they never ſo many, and keeps out of the Dragon's nature and power, by which his Followers Plot and Act Miſchief: there is a greater Power in you that are found faithful Followers of the Lamb, Chriſt Jeſus; O feel him in you the higheſt and greateſt Power; look ſtedfaſtly to him for Help in all your Diſtreſſes, Sufferings, Perils and Dangers, that you may be expoſed to, or meet with for bearing your Teſtimony for his Name and Honour's ſake, who is able and can ſave and deliver you out of all your Troubles and Sufferings, after you have ſuffered a while, and to make you perfect; more and more to unite and eſtabliſh all who have believed in his Grace and Truth, whereby in times paſt we have been ſaved and preſerved, when we have been numbred amongſt *Tranſgreſſors*, *as killed all the day long*, and *appointed as Sheep to the Slaughter*; was not then *our help of the Lord alone*? for from the *mountains* & *hills* in vain was and is *help* expected: and *Wo*, yea, *great Wo* I know will come upon them that *go down to Egypt for help*, when *troubles*, *perils*, and the *moſt fiery tryals* come for the *teſtimony of a good Conſcience* & the *Word of God*; ſuch will violate their Teſtimony to the Truth, loſe their firſt Love, and be darkned and weakned in their Faith towards God, and

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that which concerns his *honour* & their *everlasting peace*, and they will not lean upon the Lord, our *rock* and *holy One* of *Israel* in the midst of us who abide faithful, and now is witnessed great in Power, and worthy for evermore to be believed in and obeyed, trusted in, and followed fully by all that know him.

O *dear Friends*, feel God's *Salvation as Walls and Bulworks round about you, to preserve you all constant in your Love and Faithfulness unto him and his Commands or Requirings in your Testimony for God*; and let not in the *carnal Reasoner* or *Consulter*, that would lead from the *Daily Cross of Christ*, and keep you back from *following him whithersoever he goes*; then there will be a looking at the things that are seen, which are but *temporal*; and the *minds* of such will be drawn back from those things which are *invisible* and *eternal*: and the *Eye of the mind* being from the *invisible* and *eternal Power of God*, and the *testimony* thereof, there will be an *Eye* towards that which is *carnal* for *help*, *succour* and *deliverance*; so *carnal* and *outward Might* will be looked to, and the *Spirit* and *Power* of the Lord not dwelt in, whereby God hath done much for us, and will do in us and for us more and more, as we all constantly look to him, trusting in the Arm of his Power forever, he will not leave us *comfortless* in the *greatest Tryals, Exercises or Troubles, that ever hereafter we may meet with, whilst we are in this world.*

So in the unchangeable Power of God keep your Habitations and dwell for evermore; and meddle not with them that are in that that is *changeable*, who are tossed to and fro with the *Winds and Crafts of men that lie in wait to deceive*, and whereby the *simple* may be beguiled and harmed, that desires *to do nothing against the*

the Truth, but for it. So, *dear Friends*, be ye always vigilant and Watchful, that you may see the *Enemy*, who would break and divide you from your *heavenly* and *right Judgment*, & *oneneſs of Heart and Spirit* that God hath given unto many (Glory to the Lord God for evermore) in their noble Teſtimony for his Names ſake.

O! put you on the whole *Armour of God*, never to be without the *Armour of Light*, or your *Shield of Faith*, and take unto you that; when others arm themſelves with *Outward Swords* and *Carnal Weapons*, be ſure the *Weapons* you War with be *Spiritual, and Mighty through God to the throwing down of the ſtrong Holds of the Devil*, wherein he keeps many in *Diſobedience* to, and *Rebellion* againſt the *Commands of Chriſt Jeſus*, who commands us to *Love our Enemies, and to do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that deſpightfully uſe and perſecute us*; and then will you all come to ſee and bear witneſs to the *Kingdom of Chriſt Jeſus*, which is *not of this World*, as he ſaid; and then none will hate their Enemies, nor do evil to any man, but will learn of Chriſt Jeſus to *love all men*, even *your Enemies*: which mind of Chriſt Jeſus being come unto, ends all *Wars*, and cauſeth *Fightings with Carnal Weapons* to ceaſe, and brings people to *love one another*, and out of all the *Killing* that hath been in the World about *Religion*; for the mind of Chriſt Jeſus, as people come to have that, brings *Peace on Earth*, and *not Wars*, *Blood-ſheddings*, *Hurting the Creature*, that *Bloodthurſty men* delight in, and men in *Cain's* way plead for, which comes of the *wicked One*, and is all contrary to the Doctrine and Command of our *peaceable Saviour* Chriſt Jeſus.

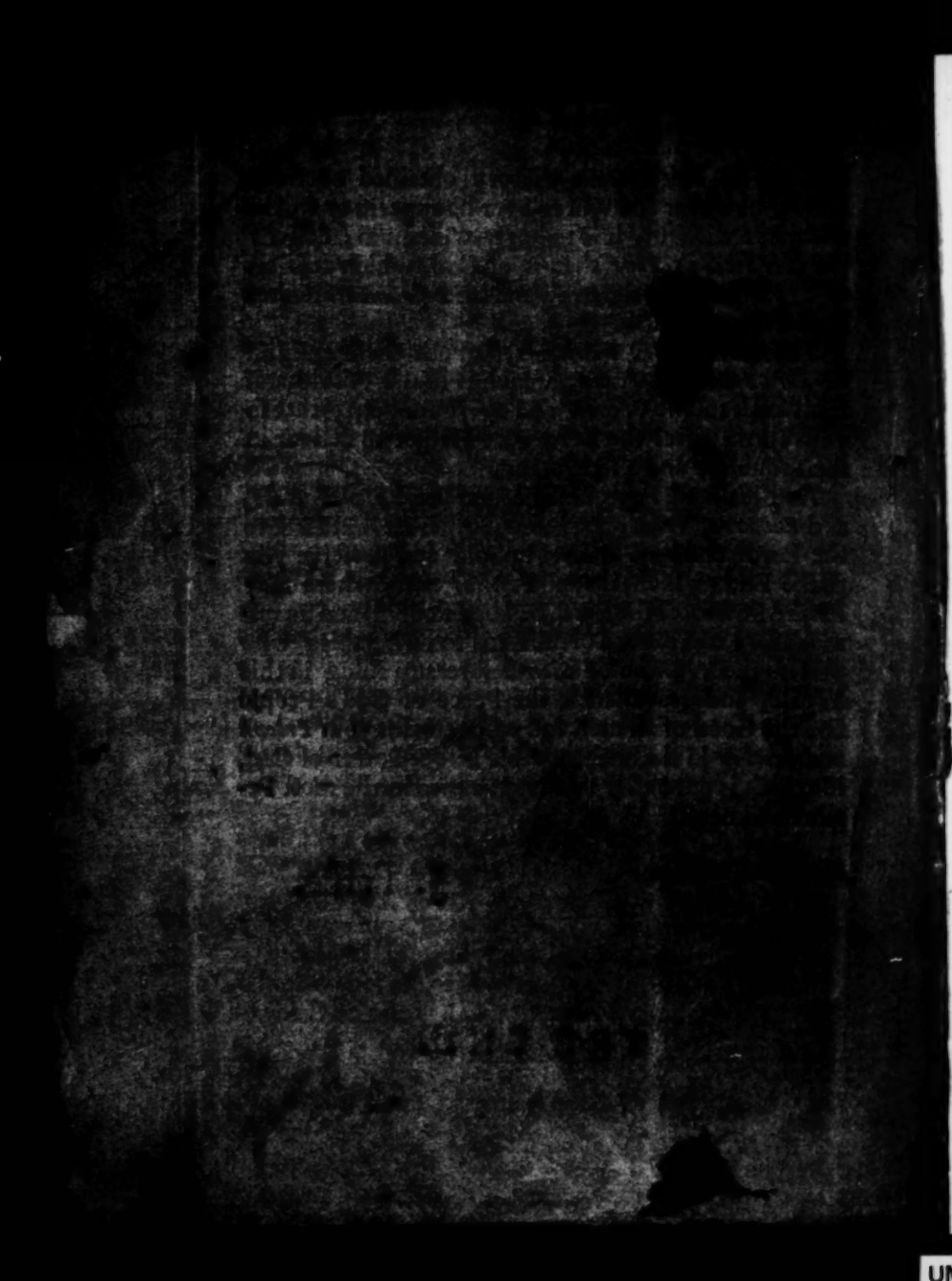
So, *dear Friends*, let the ſame mind be in you that was in him, and be you Armed therewith; for in him

him and by Faith is the Victory obtained over the Devil, however and where-ever he appears or works within or without, it is to hurt, weaken and destroy the *holy Seed* or *Babe* that is of God, which tenders Gods Honour that the *Devil* and his *Instruments* strikes at and wars against.

Therefore all, *dear Friends*, shut out the *Devil* and his *dark Spirit* and *Power*, which is in the World, and leads back to the World and *Egypt* for help; that so you all may feel the Lord your Helper to deliver in six Troubles, and also in seven.

And let none be troubled when you hear of *Wars*, and *Rumors of Wars*; look not out thereat, but look to the Lord, and he will save, uphold and preserve you to the End; which, that all *Friends* every where may by the Power of the Lord be kept stedfast and unanimous in, I was moved of the Lord to write this; who prefers the Welfare of *Sion* before any thing in this World, and travails for the Peace of God's People and the Good of all men, and who remains your *Friend* and *Brother* in the unchangeable Life & Power of God, in which is our *Safety* and *Preservation* in the most Perilous Times.

Horse-lie-down, the 9th of the 9th Moneth, 1678.

J. Parke.

THE END.